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A PSYCHO-ANALYTIC STUDY OF AUGUSTE COMTE

By PHYLLIS BLANCHARD, Clark University

Escaping from the narrow field to which they were first limited, the psycho-analytic theories have come to have an universal application, for they have built up a causal relation in human conduct. In addition to the old descriptive psychology, we have now what Crile in his *Origin and Nature of the Emotions* has defined as a "science of man's activities as determined by the environmental stimuli of his phylogeny and his ontogeny." (2:p. 154.) The repressions, the complexes, the symbolisms which Freud and his followers have found in their analyses of hysterical and insane patients, are present in the mental life of every human being. There are only two distinctions between the normal and abnormal mind, —first, the intensity and number of the repressions and complexes; second the methods by which this psycho-physical energy finds an outlet. The madman and the genius are activated by the same motives, but the insane man escapes from the painful realities of his life by means of his delusions, while the poet who has been unhappy in love finds consolation in the writing of exquisite love lyrics.

Freud, Jones, Pfister, and others have given us searching analyses of men whose names stand high in the worlds of literature, art, music, statesmanship and mysticism; Segantini, Da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Dante, Lenau, von Kleist, Wagner, Bonaparte, von Zinzendorf, etc. (6.) The field of Philosophy alone has remained almost untouched. Von Winterstein, to be sure, has said that the philosopher is actuated by two fundamental motives: first, the eternal mother-longing, which is manifested in the desire to find some ultimate principle, some lasting reality, as an anchor in the constant flux of life; and second, the narcissistic impulse which leads the philosopher to make himself, and incidentally all mankind, one with the universe and with God. (19.) Yet while these two motives may apply generally, they are insufficient to explain individual philosophies. Hitschmann, in his masterly analysis of Schopenhauer, has shown that the whole pessimistic philosophy of the latter was determined by his childhood, and that the transformation of his mother

complex into its ambi-valent form of hatred was responsible for his attitude toward all women and toward society in general. (10.) Moreover, it is not narcissism, in the strictest sense of the term, but rather the will to power which is the basis of much philosophical identification with God. Nietzsche, as Jung has pointed out in his *Psychologie der unbewussten Prozesse*, is the quintessence of this power type, since he goes so far as to make man himself the supreme overlord and to dispense with God entirely. (11: pp. 44-48.)

Auguste Comte, French philosopher and founder of the science of sociology, is no less interesting a figure for study in the light of psychoanalytic interpretation than are Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The unique quality of a mind which could construct the Positive Philosophy, and found a new science of society, yet which could later propose a cult or religion which, though profoundly truthful in its conception, was arranged in a form utterly fantastic and absurd, has long puzzled the psychologist and the student of philosophy. Many explanations of Comte's change of character have been suggested, but there have remained unnoted or misinterpreted certain forces in his life which afford a more rational explanation than any yet advanced. It is these more fundamental causes which this paper attempts to point out.

Auguste Comte was born at Montpellier, France, January 19, 1798. His family was in moderate circumstances, his father being a receiver-general of taxes. His mother, Mme. Rosalie Boyer, is characterized by Robinet as "a woman of great heart and noble character." (16: p. 115.) Like her husband, she was a devout Catholic and a staunch Royalist; but at the age of fourteen Comte had repudiated all sympathy with either belief. Instead of growing up with his brother and sister under the gentle influence of his mother, Comte was placed in the public school of Montpellier, where, though scarcely nine years old at his entrance, he made rapid progress, and was soon recognized as one of the brightest pupils. So great was his ardor for study that in three years he had completed the whole course in literature. At the age of twelve, then, he began his study of mathematics, in which branch he became so proficient that at sixteen he passed the examinations for the *École Polytechnique*, receiving one of the first places, although he was still a year below the age required for entrance. Meanwhile, one of his old masters at the Montpellier school had become ill, so Comte employed his enforced year of waiting in giving a course of mathematics there.

In 1814, Comte entered the *École Polytechnique* at Paris. Although only seventeen, and handicapped by an immature and sickly appearance, he soon showed that he possessed a mature and thoughtful mind. Brilliantly successful in his mathematical studies, he yet had much leisure time, which he devoted to the study of philosophy, the history of the French revolution and other political studies. Thus there was roused in him the first feeling of the necessity for social reconstruction and political reformation.

By comrades and teachers alike, Comte was considered an exceptional character, of superior mental ability and unusual decisiveness. But the old spirit of insubordination which he had shown even in his early school days at Montpellier, was still strong within him. His rebellious career at the *École Polytechnique* ended in 1816, when he became ringleader of an insurrection which broke up the school and caused him to be sent home under the surveillance of the police. The police supervision was neither very strict nor very long continued, but his notorious dismissal from the *École Polytechnique* proved to be a serious obstacle to the continuation of his career. However, he soon returned to Paris, where he managed to earn a living by becoming a private teacher of mathematics, and resumed his studies. He took up especially cosmology, biology and history, thus building up in his own mind the scientific hierarchy which he afterward formulated in his Positive Philosophy.

In 1818, Comte met Saint-Simon, with whom for the next six years he was to be associated as secretary, collaborator and pupil. Saint-Simon's teachings were founded on two ideals which he had only vaguely formulated: first, to establish a demonstrable faith by replacing theology with science; second, to make the proletariat a part of society by replacing war with industry. He had not, however, the intellect to take the first step toward realizing these ideals; and it remained for his more brilliant pupil to systematize and reduce to some logical form these disjointed concepts. But as Saint-Simon grew to turn more and more to theology and metaphysics, the friendship between the two men became cooler, until finally, in 1824, Comte broke off all relations with his teacher.

On February 29, 1825, despite the protests of his family and friends, Comte married Mme. Carolin Massin, with whom for some time he had been having relations in her capacity as "fille publique." Their whole married life, until their final separation in 1842, was a series of misunderstandings and a

constant source of unhappiness. Comte was an intolerable domestic tyrant, absorbed in himself and his work. His wife had no patience with his disregard of material success and prosperity, and relieved the tedium of her domestic life by frequent liaisons with other men. Altogether, Comte's personal experience was far indeed from the ideal marital relation of his writings and of his social philosophy.

In 1826, Comte began a series of lectures setting forth his Positive Philosophy, but after the first three had been given, this work was interrupted by the first of the three "mental crises" which have been so variously utilized in explaining the peculiarities of his life and work. This first cerebral attack was prolonged and severe. It led him to suicidal attempts, and necessitated his confinement in an institution where he could receive proper care and attention. By 1828, however, he had fully recovered, and was able to resume his course of lectures, and to begin his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, the first volume of which was published in 1830, the sixth and last in 1842.

In 1832, Comte became first, lecturer at the *École Polytechnique*, and then one of the examiners. Four years later, he was given the principal chair of mathematics in that institution. But his period of prosperity and recognition was short, for the publication of his Positive Philosophy, in which he had made sociology highest of the sciences, brought him once more into disfavor, and caused his second dismissal from the school. Condemned by the theologians, abandoned by the scientists, misunderstood by the Revolutionists, unknown to the mass of people, cut off from his family and deserted by his wife, Comte lived a life of complete isolation until in 1845 he met the woman who was to play so vital a part in his after life,—Mme. Clotilde de Vaux. Her physical charm and loveliness as well as the grace and intelligence of her mind, combined to make Comte love and revere her. Both were bound legally to mates whom they would never see again, but morally both were free. An equal isolation, an equal need of affection, drew them together, but an ideal of marriage unique in the purity and idealism of its conception, never permitted them the fullest expression of their affection. Throughout the short year of their companionship, until Mme. de Vaux's death in 1846, their love was always platonic, their comradeship ever on the spiritual plane. Yet it is to Mme. de Vaux's softening influence that Comte attributes his abandonment of the strictly intellectual and scientific position which he had maintained in his Positive Philosophy

for the evaluation of the emotions and the affective life which he expresses in his Positive Polity. This is the work which he terms an expression of his second career, and which was completed during the years from 1851 to 1854. Meanwhile, in 1849, he had published the Positivist Calendar, and in 1852, the Catechism of Positivism. He died in 1857, the cause of his death being a cancerous growth in the stomach.

In order to understand the marked contrast between Comte's mental attitude during his early years and that of his later life, we must keep in mind Jung's hypothesis of the two psychological types, the introvert and extrovert,—the thinking type and the feeling type. (11:pp. 9-94.) Two motives, says Jung, have previously been advanced as the basis of all human conduct. The first of these, the sexual theory, was advanced by Freud, and assumes that the great complex of instincts and emotions which center around the reproductive functions is the guiding principle of existence, that there is no joy in life equal to the joy of feeling in oneself the creative power, whether it be expressed in its original biological form or on the higher plane of productive labor. Our modern civilization has imposed upon the human race an unreasonable control of these natural tendencies, not only through economic pressure but by means of new social and moral standards. Herein lies the whole root of mental conflict, for man's primitive passions are constantly rising against the moral ideals which he attempts to impose upon himself. The erotic desires of the subconscious are incompatible with conscious morality, and hence grows the neurosis, which is inseparable from the sexual problem of our age. The neurotic is merely trying to solve the universal problem in his own personality.

The other theory of human conduct is the Adlerian postulate of the *Ichtrieb* or *Wille zur Macht*. In this statement, the instincts which lead to the preservation of the species are subordinated to the impulses which lead to the fullest development of the individual, even at the cost of racial welfare. The psychic expression of this motive is an inordinate craving for superiority and a desire to be and to do all things; but since this lust for power can never be fully satisfied, it, too, becomes the basis of the neurotic conflict.

The contradictory viewpoint of these two theories is explained, according to Jung, by the fact that both are the product of a one-sided psychology. The truth is that both principles are present in every mind. The human soul, sick or well, can never be explained by one motive alone; it is neither wholly racial nor wholly individualistic, but what these

two have made it and will make it. It is necessary, therefore, to build up a new hypothesis which shall rest on a broader foundation than either of these theories, and which shall include both of them, hence his idea of the two psychological types,—the introvert or Adlerian type, and the extrovert, or Freudian type.

"Each of the two has one function especially well developed; the introverted type uses thought as an adaptive function and thinks of its conduct in advance, while the extroverted type feels itself into an object while it acts. . . . The neurotic conflict always occurs between the adapted function and the non-differentiated and for the most part unconscious, companion function. That is, in the introverts, between thought and unconscious feeling, and in the extroverts between feeling and unconscious thought. When in the thinking man there comes a demand which he cannot master alone by thought and without differentiated feeling, then a pathogenic or traumatic conflict arises; and conversely, with the feeling man, when he faces the problem that demands differentiated thought, then comes his moment of crisis." (11: pp. 73 and 77)

These two psychological types have long been recognized, but Jung is the first to seize upon their real significance. William White, in "The Mechanisms of Character Formation," describes the extroverts as characterized by rapid reaction, prompt production, and an abundance of ideas and projects. They are admirable teachers, having a contagious enthusiasm and exercising great personal influence on their pupils. The introverts, on the other hand, are of slow reaction, produce with much effort, live removed and shut up in themselves, and give their life to the achievement of a perfect work which often secures them a posthumous celebrity, (21: p. 217-221), William James, Müller-Freienfels, and other psychologists have described similar types, differing only in applying to them other terms than introvert and extrovert.

Although every person has a slight leaning toward one type or the other, it is obvious that both impulses must exist in everyone. The passing on of the torch of life demands that the individual have both the egoistic instincts which lead to self-preservation and which are strongest in the introvert, and the broader impulses of the extrovert which lead to racial preservation.

"Civilized man," says Jung, in *Die Psychologie der Unbewussten Prozesse*, "leans a little more toward one motive than the other. For the fullest expression of life, a balanced interplay of both tendencies is necessary; together they form a complete personality." (11: p. 75.)

The two tendencies are, in fact, in a sense ambi-valent; the

individual is constantly oscillating between them according to the necessities of his environment. As will be seen later, it is in this ambivalent quality of introversion and extroversion that we find an explanation of Auguste Comte's peculiar mental reactions.

One other general concept is necessary for the proper understanding of Comte's character before we consider in detail the interacting forces which shaped his destiny,—the idea of religion as a necessary psychic function. Here, again, it is Jung who has recognized the vital significance of a fact which has been variously stated by other thinkers. Below the subconscious of Adler and Freud, which is the realm of childhood experiences, and desires, whether of infantile sexuality or infantile will for power, lie the deeper levels of the psyche which contain our phyletic memories and experiences, and which must also have their proper outlet. The chief means by which this "absolute subconscious" finds expression is through religion, which is nothing more nor less than a projection of man's own deepest emotions.

It was this projection of personality which Durkheim unwittingly described as the basic principle in totemism,—the idea of a mysterious, impersonal power, an all-pervading force, which the Australians call "Arunkulta," the Melanesians, "Mana," and the Iroquois Indians, "Orenda." (20.) Carpenter, too, in *The Gods as Embodiments of Race Memory*, has given us a beautiful exposition of this viewpoint, in which he does justice to Spenser's ghost theory of religion, and also shows the deeper underlying forces emphasized by Jung:

"Current explanations of the gods—as from generalisations of nature-phenomena, or idealisations of heroic men and women, modified by traditions, memories and dreams, and complicated by mistakes in the meanings of words and names,—are certainly suggestive; but while they help us to understand the origin of the forms of the gods, they fail almost entirely to account for their astounding power and influence, or to explain why to the savage and untutored mind mere generalisations and abstractions should have acquired such intense reality. Such gods must represent some real force influencing mankind. The figures of the gods are apparitions or manifestations of the conscious life of the race in the mind of the individual. . . . How many times in past ages has the sun broken upon our primitive ancestors, bringing relief after the darkness and terrors of the night, and giving a sense of joy and comfort. How continually has this sense grown, with reverberant intensity, in the successive generations, till at last in some more than usually subtle and sensitive soul, it has broken into a strange consciousness of a presence,—the presence, in fact, within that soul, of the myriad life and emotion of those that have gone before. There is a personification, not because we are

really coming into touch with the sun or moon, but with the great subconscious mind of the race. . . . 'The god or goddess is but the composite of numberless race memories, a beautiful, luminous ghost made of centillions of memories.' Throughout the ages, man has sought woman, woman man, and in the very nerve plexuses of every youth and maid there is imbedded a composite sex ideal bequeathed by heredity and formed by superimposing various figures upon each other. So, too, the battles of the race have stamped within us the picture of the hero. These composite memories dwell in our very nerve centers of love, pugnacity, sympathy, etc., just as the Gods dwell in their temples, and when some object of our environment rouses these sleeping recollections, we feel the presence of the gods. . . . The figure of Christ is not merely the ideal of humanity which we should strive to emulate, he is also the memory of all the suffering, all the love, all the pain we have borne in our phyletic development. . . . The life and memory of the human race, the vast accumulation of experience in the slowly evolved nervous organization of mankind, form the Olympus whereon the Gods dwell. Each unit mind is an offshoot of the racial mind; each unit body is an offshoot of the racial body; and as far as, for each individual, his mind and body register the memory of the race, they form the gate of entry into this other world." (3: pp. 259-279).

This racial memory of Carpenter's is synonymous with the absolute subconscious of Jung, and both authors have recognized that it plays a vital part in our religious life. The poets, moreover, whose sympathetic and sensitive natures often permit them to grasp in one intuitive flash the underlying principles which the scientist is laboring to explain, have long since recognized that religion is but a projection of the human soul.

"*Deus est in pectore nostro*," wrote Ovid; while in the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* we find the following significant lines:

"I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answered, 'I myself am Heaven and Hell.'

"Heaven but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire."

It is not strange, however, even with the aid of the poets, that it has not been generally recognized that our gods and demons are but the reflections of our own virtues and vices, since the distinction between the self and not-self is at best developed at a relatively late period in the life of the race and of the individual. Students of primitive mankind have found our ancestors firm in the belief that their shadows and

reflections were a part of themselves, and that their dreams were real experiences. G. Stanley Hall in *Some Early Aspects of the Sense of Self*, has shown that children commonly fail to connect various parts of their bodies with their own personalities. (8.) It is no wonder, then, that we have not realized that our deities become real to us only as they are extensions of our own mental processes.

At this point, the bearing of Jung's statement that religion is a necessary function of the human psyche becomes clear. According to him, it is dangerous to lose faith in the old Gods, unless we can substitute some more rational form of religion as an outlet for those deeper emotions which lie within the lowest levels of the human mind, the absolute subconscious. Only as we replace our old superstitions with higher and better ideals to which we can give our passionate devotion can we retain a sane and normal attitude toward ourselves and toward life. There have been formulated for this purpose, two kinds of religion: first, the religion of humanity, which allows us to lavish all our love and tender emotions upon our fellow-beings; and second, the cosmic emotion which G. Stanley Hall has summarized as follows:

"God is simply the personification of the cosmic order, and religion is loyalty to it . . . 'Our Father' is merely an expression of my filial relation to the great one and all from which my own being was derived through the long processes of evolution. I am a son of the sky and the nebulae; thence I came and into them I shall be resolved. . . . This conception makes us realize that we are relatives not only of plant and animal life, but of rocks, soil, sea, air; brothers of every element; that all are our kin, for we have the same parent,—the primordial basis out of which the world arose. . . . It is this sanifying sense of being truly at home in the cosmos on which all religions rest." (9: pp. 139-140.)

Why Comte should choose the humanitarian religion instead of the cosmic interpretation which seems so eminently adapted to his type of mind, is one of the questions which this paper attempts to answer.

In the light of Jung's theory of the two opposing psychic tendencies of thought and feeling, Comte's history becomes significant. For the greater part of his life, he was pre-eminently the introvert type, reacting intellectually rather than emotionally to most situations, and actuated always by the egoistic lust for power. Even in childhood, he had developed that tendency to immure himself in scholastic

seclusion which became so prominent a part of his later development, while his rebellious student days were but the expression of the desire to show himself superior to all about him, even the wisest of his teachers, whom even at ten he criticised severely. At the age of twenty, he writes that in emulation of Benjamin Franklin, for whom he had a great admiration, he has "formulated the design to become perfectly wise," but adds that he has dared to conceive this ideal much earlier in life than did his idol. This naïve addition to his assertion shows once more his determination never to permit himself any feeling of inferiority to others in the realm of intellectual life. Herein, Comte furnishes us with a beautiful illustration of the Adlerian principle of compensation. (1:pp. 1-34.) Robinet, his most sympathetic biographer, has pictured him as the typical example of the neurotic constitution, physically undeveloped, and disturbed by continued ailments of the alimentary organs. (16:pp. 307-315.) For this organic inferiority, he compensated by a continual striving for intellectual superiority, sacrificing to his intellect all the natural play of youth, all the emotional tang which makes life a vivid and joyous reality. This struggle for a feeling of psychic power continued during the more mature years of his life. It was manifested in his refusals to admit that his once beloved teacher, Saint-Simon, had made any faint contribution to the Positive Philosophy, and it appeared in his intolerant attitude toward his wife. Schoff, in "A Neglected Chapter in the Life of Comte," tells us that he went so far as to sign himself Brutus Bonaparte in his marriage ceremony, and that he compared himself with St. Paul and Aristotle. (17.) Finally, his extrovertive tendencies found complete expression in the work which has made his name famous—the Positive Philosophy—and which may be briefly outlined as follows (12):

Each branch of our knowledge passes successively through three different theoretical stages:

1. The theological or fictitious.
2. The metaphysical or abstract.
3. The scientific or positive.

The first is the necessary point of departure of the human understanding, and the third is its fixed or definitive stage. The second is merely a state of transition. In the theological state, the human mind, seeking the essential nature of beings, the first and final causes, the origin and purpose of all things,—in short, absolute knowledge,—supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings. In the metaphysical state, which is only a modification of the first, the mind supposes, instead of supernatural beings, abstract forces, veritable entities, personified abstractions,

inherent in all beings, and capable of producing all phenomena. In the final, the positive state, the mind has given over the vain search for Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena, and applies itself to the study of their laws,—that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblances. Reasoning and observation, duly combined, are the means to this knowledge. What is now understood when we speak of an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts.

There is no science which, having attained the positive stage, does not bear marks of having passed through the others. Some time since it was composed of metaphysical abstractions; and farther back, it took its form from theological conceptions. The different branches of our knowledge have passed through the three stages of progress at different rates, and have not therefore arrived at the same stage simultaneously.

The Positive Philosophy possesses four distinct advantages over other methods. First, the study of the Positive Philosophy affords the only rational means of exhibiting the logical laws of the human mind which have hitherto been sought by unsuitable methods. The second effect will be a regeneration of education. In the third place, it will advance the sciences by combining them. Last of all, the Positive Philosophy offers the only sound basis for that social re-organisation which must succeed the critical condition in which the most civilized nations are now living.

The principle on which we may base our classification of the sciences is found by comparison. All observable phenomena may be included within a very few categories, or sciences, so arranged that the study of each category may be grounded on the principal laws of the preceding, and serve as the basis of the next ensuing. The order of arrangement is determined by the degree of simplicity or generality of the phenomena included in each category. We must begin with the study of the most general or simple phenomena, going on to the more particular or complex, for this order fixes the degree of facility in the study of these phenomena, and is the logical connection of the sciences as determined by their successive dependence on each other. The order which results is this: Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology and Social Physics or Sociology.

Mathematics has for its object the indirect measurement of magnitudes, and it proposes to determine magnitudes by each other, according to the prime relations which exist between them. The spirit of mathematics, therefore, consists in regarding as mutually connected all the qualities which can be presented by any phenomenon whatsoever. Evidently, all phenomena may be regarded as affording such considerations, and hence results the indefinite extent, the universality and simplicity of its phenomena, which places mathematics first in the hierarchy of sciences. The three branches of the mathematical science are calculus, geometry and rational mechanics. Calculus, which consists of arithmetic and algebra, deals with the most simple and general phenomena, and the truths which it formulates holds for all things. Geometry presupposes a knowledge of calculus, while rational mechanics depends on both the others.

Astronomy logically follows mathematics, for its truths rest on arithmetical, geometrical and mechanical laws upon which it exercises no influence, but to which it adds a group of new facts. Physics depends not only on the mathematical sciences, but also on astronomy,

for terrestrial phenomena are influenced by the motion of the earth and of celestial bodies. It consists of a study of the laws which regulate the general properties of bodies, always placed in circumstances which admit of their molecules remaining unaltered. Chemistry studies the modifications that all substances may undergo in virtue of their molecular reactions, and is thus a step in advance of physics. Biology, which consists of anatomy and physiology, gives its attention to the structure and activities of an organism, calling into use when necessary the truths established by physics and chemistry. Its peculiar office is the experimental and rational study of the phenomena of interior sensibility peculiar to the cerebral ganglions.

The social science is still confused by the theological and metaphysical points of view, so that our first task is to apply the positive methods here as in the other sciences, and ascertain the chief bases on which it is founded. The first division of this category is social statics, which inquires into the conditions which constitute social equilibrium and insure the permanence of social states. The individual life, ruled by personal instincts, prepares for personal morality; the domestic life, governed by the sympathetic instincts, subordinates the selfish tendencies to sympathy; while the social life has for its guides the development of the intellect and enlightened reason. Social dynamics considers society as a series of stages, each resulting from the preceding and leading on to the next by imperceptible gradations. Broadly speaking, this progress has been from the militaristic phase through the juristic phase to the industrial phase,—three stages of social development which correspond to the theological, metaphysical and positive stages of scientific progress. The positive viewpoint will modify human existence by a reconstruction of the scientific, political, moral and esthetic life, for all activities will be based on clear knowledge of what has gone before and an increasing prevision of results.

In all probability, we could obtain no better idea of Comte's nature during the first part of his life than by this glimpse of the contents of his consciousness as revealed in his Positive Philosophy. His is indeed the extreme introvertive reaction; he has cast aside forever theology and metaphysics, and has set up the intellect as the supreme good of existence. The emotions, too, in so far as is possible, must be gotten rid of, for they are a detriment to clear thinking. He bars psychology from his hierarchy of sciences because we can neither reason about those organs with which we do our reasoning, nor observe them, while the emotions so confuse our faculties that we can come to no valuable conclusion concerning them.

But one of the queerest turns taken by Comte's tendency to introversion appeared in his system of "cerebral hygiene." Long before the completion of his first great treatise, he had adopted the rule to abstain from the reading of all newspapers, periodicals, scientific publications, and indeed of all literature except the works of Dante and one or two other favorite poets, lest he be distracted by worthless ideas. John

Stuart Mill characterizes the outcome of this mental hygiene as "a gigantic self-confidence, not to say self-conceit," and adds that "as his thoughts grew more extravagant, his self-confidence grew more outrageous." (13:pp. 127-130.) In reality, not only was Comte's egoism strengthened by this procedure, to which it had in the first place given rise, but his "cerebral hygiene" itself was result as well as cause of his colossal self-esteem.

Comte's introvertive tendencies served his purpose very well for nearly thirty years, but he could not hope to escape forever the penalty which he was doomed to pay for having so long suppressed his affective life, both personal and absolute. It is not surprising that the next fifteen years of his life were a period of conflict between these two psychic forces, in which his repressed emotions struggled to find some outlet, causing the mental crises which so puzzled his followers. Until his marriage with Carolin Massin, Comte had met every situation with thought, but this was a condition which necessitated an emotional reaction, so he promptly developed the psychoneurosis which Jung asserts to be the only refuge of the introvert in such a crisis.

As we shall see later, Comte had a well developed mother complex. Perhaps this was reinforced by the fact that he had been under the maternal care only eight years, so that the mother of his childhood memories was the mother of that early period of the child's existence when she is for him all that is tender and loving, before she has had time to become identified with any of the thwarting factors of his environment. There could be no greater contrast to such a maternal type than Comte's wife. His mother had been a delicate, refined gentlewoman, sheltered in her holy Catholic faith. Carolin Massin was a hustling, energetic, business woman, who possessed an intimate knowledge of men and of life in all its varied phases. Comte had found her quite capable of satisfying his physical desires, but when he attempted to realize in her his ideal of the wife and mother, his whole subconscious soul rose in revolt, and he slipped into the neurosis previously mentioned.

Other factors doubtless contributed to bring about his first nervous breakdown. There can be little doubt that it tended toward the manic-depressive type, for it was expressed in fits of mania alternating with suicidal impulses. Moreover, Comte's physical weaknesses were of the kind that are characteristic of manic-depressive insanity, for he suffered constantly from disturbances of the alimentary tract. It is

significant, by the way, in connection with our definition of religion as a necessary psychic function, that during the two years of his mental aberration, Comte slipped back from his Positivist beliefs into the theological state of his early youth. In the final analysis, however, we cannot but conclude that the unconscious motive of this psychosis was an attempt to force his wife to conform to the maternal ideal which governed his affective life, for its onset followed her desertion of him for another man, and his recovery was promoted by her return and faithful care.

Comte's second mental crisis in 1838, though very slight, confirms this viewpoint, for it, too, coincided with threats of desertion by his wife, and was allayed by her postponement of her decision. That it was due to an outbreak of repressed extrovertive tendencies, is shown by Comte's own discussion of it:

"Its principal marked result consisted in a vivid and permanent stimulation of my taste for the different fine arts, especially poetry and music, which then received a considerable increase. You feel immediately the spontaneous affinity with my later tendency towards a life principally affective; and further, it very happily improved my work in all relating to the esthetic evolution of humanity." (15.)

Finally, in 1845, came the great emotional crisis of Comte's life, when, under the influence of his love for Clotilde de Vaux, the affective element assumed gigantic proportions, and his introvertive tendencies swung over wholly and irrevocably to the ambi-valent impulses of extroversion. No better proofs of the remarkable influence which Clotilde exercised upon his destiny can be found than in a comparison of his second great work, the "*Système de Politique Positive*," with his first treatise on Positive Philosophy. There could be no more striking evidence of the radical change in Comte's nature than his reiteration, in this second work, of the fundamental necessity of the affective life and of religion, and his utter repudiation of his former coldly scientific viewpoint.

The Positive Polity is dedicated in the most fervent terms, "To the sacred memory of my eternal friend, Mme. Clotilde de Vaux," and this dedication is ended with a quotation from Dante, which applies to Clotilde the impassioned and reverent apostrophe which the poet addressed to Beatrice. The appendix to the first volume contains Mme. de Vaux's novelette, *Lucie*, which is nothing more nor less than a picture of her own life, little to be recommended from a literary viewpoint, though Comte classed it with the works of George Sand. It

also contains her poem, *Thoughts of a Flower*, which Comte valued so highly and rated so absurdly.

The Positive Polity proper is published in four volumes, and its scope may be stated as follows. (5.)

Volume I is entitled *A General View of Positivism*, and is a summary of Comte's Positive Philosophy and religion of humanity, and a statement of his plan of social reconstruction of which Love is the principle, Order the basis, and Progress the end. The Positivism of this writing is, however, a different Positivism from that explained in his earlier works, for it recognizes that the intellect must ever be subordinated to the affective life. The new Positivism means a control of the selfish affections and a strengthening of the unselfish motives. While it makes the emotions the highest force in life, it will satisfy the reason by making Sociology still the supreme science and humanity our God. It will make use of its knowledge of the laws of social relativity to aid human progress, and it will set up a priesthood to teach the subordination of selfish love to social love.

This is a most auspicious time to introduce Positivism, for the French Revolution has stimulated the desire for progress and hence will lead to a study of social phenomena. Under the influence of the Revolution too, a sense of human development and the social feelings has arisen in the minds of people on the lower classes, not only in France but in all Western Europe. The great problem of reconstruction is the subordination of politics to morals, and it will be worked out in a republic composed of Italy, Spain, England and Germany grouped around France as the center.

Spiritual organization is the only point where an immediate beginning can be made, and when this has progressed sufficiently it will regenerate political institutions. We must have a priesthood to educate the social emotions which are the basis of morality.

The domestic relations form the bridge between selfish love and universal benevolence. Woman as wife and mother has a great mission, for the worship of woman is a preparation for the worship of humanity. The Positivism which is based only on science and the intellect is incomplete. Complete Positivism gives play to the emotions in poetry, art and religion. The religion of humanity is the rational culmination of Positivism, the great conception toward which every aspect of that philosophy converges. We must therefore institute a calendar in commemoration of those who have served Humanity, and hold festivals in worship of this Great Being.

Science and art cooperate in the service of this religion. The history of universal Love, the soul by which the Great Being Humanity is animated, is in itself an endless theme for the poetry of the future, while artists can devote their noblest works to a representation of the emblem of the Great Being, a woman of thirty with her son in her arms. The sciences all lead to the supreme science of Sociology, and hence can be used in the service of Humanity.

Here, only, does Comte digress from his theme of love and religion long enough to give a brief review of his hierarchy of sciences as elaborated in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*.

The second volume of Positive Polity is called *Social Statics*. It, too, stresses the necessity of religion in words which seem to be drawn from Comte's own experience, for he declares that no mere scientific knowledge can bring to us inner harmony, but that unity of man within can arise only by submission to an Order without; that we

must find an emotional outlet in a Being like but superior to man. This introduction is followed by an historical sketch of religion, a survey of the family and other social institutions, and by a revised hierarchy of sciences in which there is placed above the science of Sociology a new science of Morals, which it is the duty of the priesthood to teach.

In the interval between the publication of this volume and the following one, Comte wrote *The Catechism of the Positive Religion*, a popular exposition of the religion of humanity which he was treating more adequately in his *Positive Polity*, and which contained, among other data, his *Positivist Calendar* with its months and days consecrated to the memory of those who had benefited humanity by their lives and deeds. The name of Clotilde de Vaux was prominent among the saints listed on this calendar.

Volume III, *Social Dynamics*, is an account of man's evolution from a less religious to a more religious state. The human mind has had three chief stages of development. The first of these is the physical, which is more general but less complex and less noble than the other two. The second is the intellectual, which is more complex and noble than the first, but less so than the third. The third is the moral stage, which is less general, but more complex and noble than either of the others. Thus, while retaining his old idea of social development through the militaristic, juristic and industrial stages; he casts aside his former theory of the three stages of human knowledge,—the theological, metaphysical and scientific. The major part of the third volume is devoted to an evaluation of the contributions to social progress made by the social organizations of the past through their religious forms and ceremonies.

The fourth and last volume of the *Positive Polity* is "The Synthetic Presentation of the Future of Man," and involves a presentation of the religion of humanity in all its details, as well as the scheme for its introduction as the world religion. The Great Being Humanity is defined as "the whole constituted by the beings past, present and future, which co-operate willingly in perfecting the order of the world." It is, therefore, represented by the dead, who collectively represent humanity. Fetichism is brought into its service because fetichism in inculcating a love for external objects, paves the way for enhancing the altruistic emotions, and thus develops love of humanity. Immortality is subjective, and means incorporation in the Great Being Humanity, and a living on thus in the memory of succeeding generations. There are two methods of worship in this religion: one, the worship of Humanity itself; the other, adoration of its personification in woman as wife and mother.

In place of the confirmation rites of Catholicism, the priesthood of humanity will administer to each person nine sacraments. The first of these is known as presentation, and takes place at birth. The priests accept the newborn child presented by the parents, and promise to prepare it for the service of the Goddess of Humanity. The second is initiation, and is the transference of the fourteen year old child from the maternal care to the systematic training of the priesthood. The third is admission and is the authorization of the twenty-one year old youth or maid to serve humanity. Destination, the fourth

sacrament, is administered at the age of twenty-eight, and is the consecration of the man to his life work. In the case of woman, this sacrament is combined with the fifth sacrament of marriage, for woman has no other destination. The sixth sacrament, maturity, which takes place at forty-two, impresses upon man the stern responsibility of service to humanity. Twenty-one years later comes the seventh sacrament, which is called retirement, and which limits personal influence to counsel and advice. The eighth sacrament of transformation replaces the old Catholic death bed ceremony, and consists of a just summing up of a man's life and his commitment to the other world. Seven years after death is the ninth and last sacrament of incorporation, which is the final decision of the priesthood as to whether the dead person is to be incorporated in the Great Being Humanity, or consigned to oblivion.

The other distinguishing features of the religion of humanity and the Positivist regime, are the supreme power of the priesthood, the calendar previously mentioned in connection with the Positivist Catechism, and the annihilation of all books except the 150 volumes (mostly poetry) which Comte deemed worthy of preservation in his Positivist Library.

It is the extreme contradiction between Comte's positions in his two great works that his biographers have tried to reconcile, and psychologists have attempted to explain. Amid these diverse opinions, there is at least one point of agreement,—that his relations with Clotilde de Vaux were the turning point in his career. Theirs was indeed a strange companionship. Mme. de Vaux was born of a highly respectable family, and possessed a delicate, spirituelle beauty combined with native intelligence and rare charm of personality. Shortly after her marriage, her husband had been convicted of capital crime and sentenced for life to the galleys, so that she was living in the same moral freedom and personal isolation as Comte himself. The sympathy which the similarity of their positions enabled them to feel so poignantly for each other soon grew into a deeper attachment, but though their meetings were frequent and they exchanged daily letters which breathed the tenderest devotion, their love never found any fuller expression. It was only a year after their first meeting that Clotilde died, but her memory could never expire in Comte's mind. (5.) "When Beatrice died, Dante's grief filled her room up with something fairer than the reality had ever been. There is no idealizer like unavailing regret, all the more if it be a regret of fancy as much as of real feeling. She early began to undergo that change into something rich and strange in the sea of his mind which so completely supernaturalized her at the last." (Lowell: *Among My Books, Vol. II: Dante.*) Even so, Clotilde became for Comte what his favorite heroine, Beatrice, had been to Dante.

"Dear angel," he says, after her death, "I can only adore you by trying to serve better the Great Being in whom I know you are irrevocably incorporated."

But this worship for Mme. de Vaux passed all bounds of rationality and became fetichistic in its import. The arm chair in which she was wont to sit became his altar where three times daily he prayed to her divine memory; he made weekly pilgrimages to her tomb even as the palmers of old sought the holy sepulchre; a flower she had worn, her "sacred letters," became so impregnated with the thought of her as to suggest her presence; her illiterate servant girl, Sophie Bliot, became idealized in Comte's eyes because she had served her mistress so faithfully, and finally, he repeated every morning of the nine years during which he survived her death the following poem written by Mme. de Vaux, which he characterizes as "graceful verses, whose sweetness might well have been envied by Petrarch." (4.)

THE THOUGHTS OF A FLOWER

O ! thanks my good fate ! to be loved I am born !
 Let mortals still rail against thee in their might,
 Let pride to the foot of thy altars invite,
 I have my perfumes and my morn.

I have the first glance of the sovereign of day,
 His fiery kiss, his splendid array;
 A sisterly smile young Aurora bestows;
 I have the fresh breeze, and the flavor that flows
 From the dewdrop that rests on my chalice's brim;
 I've the sunbeam that sports on the precipice's rim,
 I've the magical picture, the unrivalled display,
 Of the universe opening the portals of day.

The coldness of mortals my life cannot blight;
 So sweetly I sleep on the breast of delight;
 Protected by nature, whose wealth I ne'er miss,
 Transported I wake to her banquet of bliss.

To beauty a charm I have often supplied,
 On a pure heart my pure light shines,
 Pleasure in garlands me entwines,
 And happiness fastens me to its side.

When the nightingale rides
 On my stem in its play,
 That its song may have sway,
 All nature subsides,
 Its secrets love whispers to me,
 Positions so sweet I defend,
 My aid in its mysteries lend,
 Of all modest hearts I'm the key.

O, sweet fate, if unholy sighs
 Had power the course of thy laws to move,
 Alone here below, in my transparent guise,
 I would bud at the breath of love.

To storms that defile,
 Surrender me never,
 May the flowers ever
 At love's festivals smile.

It is no wonder that Comte's religion of Humanity set forth in his Positive Polity has been considered simply his commemorative worship of Clotilde de Vaux extended to a universal scale. Dumas considers it a revival of his early training in the rites of Catholicism, in which he substituted Mme. de Vaux for the Virgin Mary, and transformed his human love into a mystic form. (7: pp. 193-246.)

"His was a love always sensual, and Clotilde, while exciting it to the utmost, repressed it. He became voluntarily chaste after knowing her. Comte's religion had an inspiring motif and an universal one, but his love for Clotilde transformed it Finally, the glorification of woman is the glorification of Clotilde, and the social rôle which he attributes to them is the rôle which she played in his own life." (7: pp. 198-210.)

This interpretation of the rôle Clotilde played in Comte's life and in the development of his Positivist Religion is fundamentally correct, but Dumas misses a connection finer and more subtle than that of mere repression and sublimation of the sex instinct in its simple form. Clotilde drew Comte's affections irresistibly to herself not through sympathy or mere physical attraction, but because she was the realization of his mother ideal. His mother had been a noble woman, enshrined in her holy Catholic faith. Clotilde was similarly pure and true in thought and act. Just as his Oedipus complex had prevented him from feeling any real love for his wife, although she satisfied his sensual nature, so it bound him irrevocably to the woman who never yielded to his passionate desires. Comte himself had some dim intimation of this mother identification, for he writes in the preface of his Positive Polity:

"A noble and tender mother, whom I lost fourteen years ago, was the first real source of all my essential qualities, not merely of emotions, but also of practical and even of intellectual capacities. Nevertheless, I have now humbly to confess that I never felt for her that love which her worth and her sorrows claimed; and that even what love I felt was never

sufficiently shown, owing to the false shame of seeming too fond which is stimulated by modern training. But the worship of my Clotilde has at last aroused in me veneration for my honored mother. Her image and that of Rosalie Boyer are more and more intimately mingled, both in my weekly visits to the cherished tomb and in my daily prayers." (5 p. xviii.)

It is in this Oedipus complex, also, that we find the key to Comte's religious conception. Had he been wholly the introvert, his deeper subconscious life would have found its expression in the type of religion common to so many other philosophers,—the cosmic interpretation mentioned earlier in this paper. But in his case, the long repressed mother love shaped his unconscious projection in religion. Everywhere, woman—the maternal type—is the supreme ideal. The symbol of the *Grand Être* Humanity is a woman of thirty with her son in her arms. (Clotilde had died at the age of thirty-two). Likewise, the *Grand Fétiche* is mother earth. And the qualities which Comte would have every human being cultivate and make the guiding principle of his life are the mother qualities,—sympathy, unselfish love and tender helpfulness.

It is true that in its worship of the madonna Comte's religion of humanity resembled the Catholic faith. Moreover, the supreme power of the priesthood to judge both the living and the dead; the Positivist Calendar with its religious festivals and commemorative worship of the sainted dead who have best served society; the nine social sacraments which replace the old rites of baptism, confirmation and death bed confession; the incorporation of fetichism which is so strongly suggestive of relic worship;—all these are reminiscent of Catholicism. Yet these parallelisms account only for the form which Comte's religious enthusiasm assumed; they do not explain its ultimate origin. The deeper source, as has been intimated, is the necessity of objectifying those lower levels of the subconscious formed by phyletic experience, and furnishing an outlet for long repressed infantile desires.

In the final analysis, it is safe to conclude that Comte was essentially the introvert, but three times during his career, his unconscious emotional life came to the surface, resulting each time in a conflict that led to a mental derangement which lasted until his intellectual faculties could resume their interrupted sway. In his third and last crisis, which occurred just after he had fallen in love with Clotilde de Vaux, there were several complicating factors which reinforced his extrovertive functions. As a result, the latter remained in power, and found expression in his exaggeration of the affective element

as the supreme good of all existence, and in his religious doctrines. It may be that his system of commemorative worship was doubly motivated, and that it not only gave him an opportunity of expressing his love for Clotilde, but that it also gave him assurance that he, too, would be honored in death as he never had been in life. This once supreme will to power made one other attempt to assert itself, resulting in Comte's attempt to place himself in the office of the High Priest of Humanity;—if he can no longer be the supreme intellectual being, he will at least become the highest moralist, the great religious pontiff of the whole world.

It is time to recapitulate the interacting conditions which united to reinforce the last great outbreak of Comte's affective life. In the first place, Robinet assures us that he had that mental diathesis, that innate instability of the nervous system, which predisposes its possessor to the neurotic conflict. (16:pp. 307-315.) During adolescence, which is normally a period of intense emotional sublimation, of imaginative day-dreams and heroic idealizations, Comte had sternly repressed all these natural tendencies, making reason his one ideal. The period just previous to senescence with its entire loss of passion, is in a sense a repetition of adolescence, for it is conditioned by a resurgent outburst of affectivity and a corresponding lack of control. It is a phylogenetic regression, in which old feelings and the beliefs grounded in them rise again, and dominate thought, and will not submit to its rule. (18: pp. 180-181.)

It was at this critical period of his life, when he was just forty-seven years of age, that Comte met Clotilde de Vaux. Shaken to the depths of his being already by the emotional disturbances due to his age and reinforced by the physical repressions of his youth and early manhood, Comte now attempted to impose upon himself the additional burden of physical repression, that he might be worthy of the affection of the woman who was for him the embodiment of all purity and goodness, the personification of his unconscious mother ideal. Whether Clotilde also awakened that phyletic image imbedded within his deeper subconscious life—the sexual ideal formed by his racial memories—we can only speculate, though the deeply religious feeling which he now felt for the first time would seem to indicate that such was the fact. It is quite possible, however, that this is sufficiently explained by his long repression of the deeper subconscious life which ordinarily finds expression through the medium of religion, and its consequent increase in energy.

This we know,—that Comte's pent-up emotional life would no longer be denied, but rushed forth in a mighty torrent, sweeping all before it, projecting itself upon all objects of the external world upon the slightest pretext, and creating for itself new outlets in a world made half of phantasies. And so he seized upon religion, which has always been the supreme emotional outlet of the human race, creating for himself and for mankind, a faith expressed largely in the terms of the old Catholic belief of his infancy, and affording the highest gratification of his human love. As the affective forces of his life grew stronger and stronger, he came to have that hatred of the intellectual and of scientific research which so puzzled his followers, until at last he planned a general holocaust of all books except the few which he deemed worthy of preservation in the Positivist library. Thus he ended his brilliant career in a storm of emotion which never allowed him to make proper adjustments to life because his adaptive functions had so long been governed entirely by thought.

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